

From *NEW-GATE*

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PRISONERS

Just Cause

PLEADED,

Against all his

PERSECUTORS,

And let the WITNESSE of God in all consciences be judge in this matter.

First, **B**E it known unto you all, that I with many more of the people of God (called Quakers) are not here upon the Fact of Felony, or Murther, or Whoredom, or Drunkenness, or for Swearing, &c. but for the freedom of our consciences in denying to Swear, according to Christs Doctrine: and now whether we are guilty or not guilty in this matter of the breach of a righteous Law, and so deserving imprisonment or bonds, let the WITNESSE of God in the conscience be judge even in this matter.

Again, be it known unto you all, that I with many more of the People of God before mentioned, did never *Ass*, *Plot*, or *Agitate* mischief against the KING, or any other Person within his Dominion: but we are peaceable men, and only desire and require our just Freedom in the Nation of our nativity, and also the exercise of our consciences towards God without

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without molestation, and for to be preserved in peace, as we are peaceable Subjects of the Nation; We in our severall places pay Custome and Tribute to those in Authority, that violence may not be done unto us; yet, behold, what havock is made of us? How are our goods spoiled, and our bodies imprisoned, and many sick and weak amongst us, and some families hereby exposed to poverty and want, if God take not a special care for them? And now whether we or our persecutors are guilty of sin and wickedness against God (in this matter) let his witness in the conscience be judge even in this our cause.

Again, it is well known (to almost all) that the KING before his coming into England, whilst he was yet at Breda, that he gave forth a Declaration there, promising free liberty to tender consciences in matters of Religion, &c. provided they live peaceably in the Kingdom, and this Declaration is revived since his coming to England: But surely this is made of none effect, for we can plead guiltless, both before God, Angels and men, that we have not forfeited our liberty therein mentioned, by any Act, Plot or agitation against the KING, or any other Person within the Dominion of England; yet nevertheless let the Goals in England testify what heaps are cast into them, and what havock is made of the Innocent that make conscience of an oath. And indeed it is true, besides all this (before mentioned) in the Declaration promising liberty, that we had the word of a King, even from his own mouth, that we should not suffer for the exercise of our consciences in matters of Religion, &c. But alas, alas, what doth this word avail us now, whilst the rude multitude are let loose upon us, yea inso much that it may be truly said, if God were not on our side, they would swallow us up through their unsatiable desires. On this may be taken up as a lamentation over England at this day, that her Rulers should make no more conscience of their promises and engagements, surely the guilt hereof cannot but lie heavy upon their consciences: and so let the witness of God in all consciences arise, and judge for us in this matter.

And again consider, what a lingering Imprisonment we are in, men and women cast in by heaps together, and through the straitness of room, they are much thronged together, both
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In this Goele and others; and sundry Persons of us are weak and sickly, and by all outward appearance, if we are thus continued in such frailties, weaknesse and sickness may much more abound. And alas, what commiseration is there in the hearts of men in Authority towards us; do we not see mercy (as it were) turned into cruelty, even towards them that never deserved wrath at their hands? and may we not hereby in truth conclude with the Prophet of old; *that the best of them is as a briar, and the most upright as a thorn hedge*, Mic. 7. 4. Oh that the witness of God in our enemies and persecutors might be awakened to plead our innocent cause! and this is that which we wait for, and suffer in patience to see, even the wicked smitten and wounded in their own hearts, that their wickedness, cruelty and persecution may come to an end; and Truth, and Equity and Righteousness to be exalted, even to bear rule in the hearts of both Kings and Princes: Then, O then rejoyce ye that love righteousness, when our Lord and King reigns in righteousness in the Kingdoms of men: Oh blessed day shall that be called, when Kings reign in the Dominion of Gods pure, righteous, holy Spirit, then shall the meek of the earth inherit their freedom, and he that is a peaceable man shall have the praise, and the terror shall be to the evil doer, which never shall be renowned. O sink down, sink down to Gods witness in your own hearts, which will bring you into a sence of your own conditions, and also break the bonds of oppression. Oh let not the cry of the oppressed be alwayes against you, for our God is mighty to save his people, and to destroy his enemies: but if he will not take vengeance, we shall freely forgive them; for the Lord our God hath given us of his Spirit, to bear the contradiction of sinners, yea all their hard speeches and cruelties, and to suffer long in patience, until the measure of their iniquity be fully filled. And hereby know we, that we are of God, because he has given us of his Spirit, which leads into unity and peace with himself, and one with another, out of the enmity, wrath, malice, hatred, revenge and persecution, which are all works of darkness, and brought forth by the children of darkness; for we know such as live in these things, are not led by Christs spirit, & so are none of his, but against him in the enmity; no true

Christians, but of Antichrist and in the Heathenish nature; and these make war against the Saints, who follow the Lamb, who cannot lift up a carnal weapon against any man; yet in the patient suffering under the persecutor shall our victory be obtained. But this may be a mystery to the children of darkness; yet hear a little further, and I shall shew you, thus it is, the innocent suffering of Gods people shall reach to the witness of God even in their persecutors; and when they smite and wound the innocent, God shall smite and wound them, even the wicked in their own hearts; and thus the Lord will fight our battles, and work freedom and redemption to his people. Therefore hear, hear and fear the living God of the whole earth, who is a Spirit, and will judge the wicked in their own hearts; yea, that is he that convicts the Transgressor for the evil of his waies, and he it is that will make himself manifest to be a God near at hand, though men have been looking, and seeking of him as one afar off, yet our God is drawing near unto judgement, and the wicked shall know it, and feel the rod of his wrath, even in their own hearts; this is the true and living God, whom the Nations, in the ignorance of their minds make mention of, but are estranged from him; and therefore doth iniquity, transgression, abomination, false worship, and idolatry abound in this Generation; and this hath grieved the Spirit of the Lord, who is a Spirit, and will be worshipped, revered, served, and submitted unto in the Spirit; and people being out of this, all their outward observations and gatherings of assemblies, and talking of Church and Church-worship is a practice not acceptable with the Lord, whilst man is found out of the subjection to him in the Spirit; therefore let none deceive themselves, the Lord our God will indeed not be mocked; but search your selves, and see whom you yeild subjection unto *within*, whether it be unto him that reprove for sin, or unto him that leads into sin? and so be unto whom obedience is yeilded, the same is thy God; and the day is come that people are to be tried and searched *within*, for the Lord requires obedience there, even in the heart, that so man may be brought by the leading of his eternal power and Spirit, out of the darknesse, out of the spiritual wickednesse, out of the house of bondage, yea, to be quickned and made

made alive unto God again, and here is the *new man* brought forth in Gods image, to glorifie his Maker, to live unto him and to serve him, yea to delight in the way of his Commandements: But all that are out of this, are excluded out of the Kingdom, all wicked and envious ones, persecuters and murderers, swearers and liars, and all that are in the transgression of the pure Law written in the heart, these are shut out of Gods Kingdom, whatever their professions are, names, and words, and fair professions in outward appearance, cannot administer an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore now come to that which is more excellent and acceptable with God, even the *Light and Spirit in the inward parts*, thereby to be led out of sin, and transgression, and all the works of darknesse, out of wrath, malice, envy, persecution, and oppression; for the Light and Spirit of the Lord leads out of these things, into truth and righteousness, meeknesse and patience, into unity and peace with God, and one with another; and these are the true Christians that are thus led, and thus purified from uncleannesse, by the Spirit and power of God in the *inward parts*; and here's the true worship of God in the Spirit, and here have the children of light that walk in the light, fellowship with God, and one with another, in the light, and in the Spirit; and unto this must the gathering of the Nations be, for all the Nations of them that are saved, must walk in the light of the Lord, which leads out of the separation, uncleannesse, and deeds of darknesse, and brings back again unto God, into the new and everlasting Covenant; and here is the new and living way, wherein acceptance with God is found.

And now to conclude, This doth the Lord require from you all, grieve not his Spirit, provoke him not to wrath by persecuting of his Servants, do them no harm; they are as dear to him as the apple of his eye; therefore oh take heed, let not the guilt of these things lie upon your Consciences; for we testifie of a truth, whether you will hear or forbear, that our God will visit for these things; and behold, this is the crying sin that draws down Gods judgement upon a people, as in the dayes of old, was it not so with the *Sodomites*, who lived in pride and fulnesse of bread? This God suffered long, but when they per-

scanted righteous Lot, this brought his long-suffering to an end, and judgement from heaven was revealed upon them; and this was an example for all that might follow after, living in their ungodly conversation: that they might take warning not to persecute the righteous, least they perish by the same revelation of the righteous judgement of God. Oh that men would consider of the things which belong unto their peace, before the decree of God be sealed against them unto eternal condemnation.

And as for us, who are at this day a persecuted people, for Righteousnesse sake, for the Name of Christ, we have received the Testimony of his Eternal Spirit, that wrath is not in him against us, though he may suffer the enemy to exercise cruelty upon us for a season, yet behold the Lot of our inheritance shall not be alwaies here: *Therefore look above all these things, ye children of the Light, ye Sons of Sions King, and Daughters of new Jerusalem, which shall be gloriously situated, even upon the Holy Mountain, where none shall make afraid, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon his people, and with his Righteousnesse as with a garment shall they be covered.* Oh the infinitenesse of that invisible glory and eternal inheritance of the Saints, which no mortal eye can behold! Yet great things hath God revealed unto us by his Spirit, and he hath sealed us for his own; Therefore let all the Saints rejoyce in heart, and blesse, and praise, and magnifie his Name, who lives for ever.

And what if the wicked will be wicked still, and the unrighteous hate to be reformed, let us leave them to the execution of the eternal judgement from the Lord our God; yet as we are moved in tender love to their souls, let us warn them to bring forth fruits meet for Repentance; and such as reject our message, which is the message of the Lord, their blood be upon their own heads; and the day cometh, when this wofull lamentation shall be taken up by them, *How have we hated instruction and despised the day of healing?*

Here followeth some examples of Gods righteous judgement upon them
that persecuted his people in former generations.

Cain that old Persecutor about Religion, was banished
and termed a fugative and a vagabond in the earth, be-
cause of his persecuting of his brother about Religi-
on; for Cain envied and slew his brother, and where-
fore was it? because his brothers sacrifice was accepted, and
his was not.

And read the 19th chapter of Genesis, and see and take no-
tice what became of the persecuting Sodomites, who beset Lots
house where the Servants of God were, and demanded them
out of his house, for to do unto them even as their wick-
ed hearts were bent; but the Angel of God smote these per-
secutors with blindness, *vers. 12.* and moreover the Angel
said unto Lot, *Take thy Wife and thy Daughters &c. and go forth
of the City, for the wickednesse thereof is full, and it shall be destroy-
ed: and Lot did accordingly; and Gods judgement was re-
vealed from heaven in flames of fire upon the Sodomites, vers.
24, 25.*

And consider King Pharaoh, that great persecutor and op-
pressor of Gods people, how God plagued him, and his hosts
of mighty men, because of their grievous oppression of the seed
that God had chosen and blessed; therefore was Pharaoh and
his mighty men plagued seven times, and at last an utter de-
struction came upon them, and Pharaoh and his host with all
the Egyptians were drowned in the Red sea, *Exod. 14. 27.*

And consider what became of envious Haman, who prepa-
red a gallows for Mordecai, who was more righteous then him-
self. And Haman incensed the King against Mordecai and the
Jews, and gained an order to destroy the Jews throughout all
his dominion; but the God of heaven gave not license to this,
but confounded their conspiracies, and turned their deter-
mination backward, and Haman was hanged upon the gallows
which he built for Mordecai, *Eth. 5. 14.* And thus Gods judge-
ment was revealed upon him, and them that persecuted those
that

that were more righteous then themselves, read *Ester* 3. 4. and 5. Chapters.

And in the daies of the *Prophets* amongst the *Jews*, God revealed his righteous judgement upon them that persecuted about Religion, because they persecuted the *Prophets*, and just men whom God sent unto them, therefore Gods wrath was kindled against them, and the judgements written in the Book came upon them; destruction upon destruction, they were driven out of their Country, and were captives in a strange land, their Temple was destroyed, and desolation came upon their Princely places, and a voice of woe, and misery, and great lamentation was heard in all their borders; and this people God often warned by his *Prophets* and *Servants* (as this generation hath been) before his irrevocable decree came upon them to utter destruction.

And take notice of Gods judgement upon *Herod*, for persecuting and murthering of the people of God, read *Acts* 12. And it came to passe that the Angel of God smote him, and he was eaten up of worms. This hapned unto a persecuting King, *Acts* 12. 13.

These examples of Gods judgement may serve to warn this generation, lest by their persecuting of Gods people they draw down the same judgements upon them; for this is that crying sin which fills up the measure of iniquity, and draws down Gods righteous judgement upon a rebellious people. *Pharaoh* had a day, and the *Jews* of old had a day of visitation, before destruction came upon them; but Gods love was not regarded and his judgement broke forth upon them: And now *England* hath a day, or a little time before Gods judgment be revealed unto destruction upon all his enemies, except they repent.

The 25. of the 12. month, 1660. In Newgate, John Higgins. which hath been often termed a Den of Thieves, but may be called now an House of Prayer.

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